

Blood Moon Rising: Episode 1

🕒 1:15:50

S Storyteller Rina 00:01

Thank you for joining us wherever you are. This podcast episode is brought to you by the Old Ways actual play team. This actual play uses the 5th edition Vampire the Masquerade tabletop role playing rules by World of Darkness. This actual play is performed by adults and an adult setting. Listeners should know that this podcast is intended for a mature audience and will include strong language and mature themes. All content including names, places, events, companies, and so forth that may bear resemblance to entities living, dead, or undead is strictly coincidental. My name is Rina Haenze, and for tonight's game, I will be your storyteller.

S Storyteller Rina 01:00

Greetings, everyone, and welcome to the first full cast episode of the Old Ways Podcast's Vampire the Masquerade chronicle "Blood Moon Rising." I am your Storyteller, Storyteller Rina, and tonight we have our full coterie together for the very first time. I'm sure they'll get along just fine, and there will be no dramatics whatsoever. But before we get into the delights we have planned for you tonight, I'd like to say thank you to our Patreon backers for selecting this campaign as the third story in the world of the Old Ways, and the cast and I are thrilled to present our version of San Francisco by night to all of you. And now let's have some introductions. To my right:

M Mike (Marcus) 01:40

Yeah. Hi, I'm Mike and I am playing Marcus Voss, a member of Clan Brujah.

S Storyteller Rina 01:46

Yes, going to get some agitation up in here, probably, it sounds like. And to Mike's right:

- J** John (Vince) 01:52
Hi, I'm John and I'll be playing Vince Markewich of Clan Tremere.
- S** Storyteller Rina 01:59
Book learning, that'll get you everywhere. To John's right:
- T** Teagan (Rahm) 02:04
Hi, my name is Tegan and I'm playing Rahm the Shaman and I am a Malkavian.
- S** Storyteller Rina 02:10
Spooky. To Teagan's right:
- K** Katerina 02:16
Hi, I'm Ali, and I am playing Katarina Bogdanovich. And I am a member of Clan Toreador.
- S** Storyteller Rina 02:25
Got to get the flash and the flamboyance up in here. And normally, I would say last but not least, but we do have an extra person tonight. So for now, we'll just say to Ali's right:
- T** Tiffanie (Alex) 02:39
This is Tiffanie and I am playing Alex Giovanni, of Clan Hecata, and I see dead things.
- S** Storyteller Rina 02:48
Many, many dead things, most of them your friends. So this time, last but not least, we have a special guest with us tonight. And who might that be?
- B** Bridgett (The Prince) 03:01
Hello, everyone. My name is Bridgett Jeffries. I am super grateful to be here. And I'm just gonna lurk in, hang out and see how you guys do.

S

Storyteller Rina 03:11

Nothing ominous about that whatsoever. Wonderful. So let us begin in San Francisco, after dark, in many ways, I'm sure. This world is the world of October 2022, in a slightly mythical 2022, in which the pandemic is mostly over. Most people are vaccinated and people are able to return to their natural daily lives. And in the case of our vampires, their natural nightly lives. San Francisco is a city of contrasts. You have the warm California sun, but you also have the freezing cold winds coming off the bay, especially at night. You have the uber-wealthy from Silicon Valley and the tech startups and the law firms and the oil companies. And you also have one of the highest homeless populations in anywhere in the United States. There are very few streets you can walk down without seeing a flashy car drive by at the same time you walk past three or four homeless people sleeping in sleeping bags with cans and little signs asking for help, all at the same time. You have multiple immigrant populations, from Asians, many of whom their families have been there since the railroads were built and the California Gold Rush began, you have many Latino folks coming up from Mexico and Central America, and in the 2020s, you have even a fairly decent-sized immigrant population from Peru coming into San Francisco, living down in the Mission District. And you have a lot of subcultures happening throughout the city. It's fairly easy for any smart vampire to blend in with any of the hipsters, the tech geeks, the lawyers, the tourists, the fishermen, the dock workers, the agitators, any of those things. In our San Francisco, we find a Camarilla stronghold. Much of California is run by the Anarchs in this modern world, but San Francisco and its Prince has held on very tightly to the old ways. And most of the hierarchy consists of members of the Camarilla who have been there for generations, if not longer. And it's for this reason, that what we find down in the night life of the city, we find mostly Malkavians, we find Tremere - they're everywhere - we find the Toreadors living the flashy life, most of them. We don't find as many of Clan Brujah anymore; many of them split off to join the Anarchs, but some of them, especially the part of the Clan that's been in San Francisco since the very, very beginning with the labor strikes and the Gold Rush and building the transcontinental railroads, they've been here since the beginning and see no reason to leave. And you have some Lasombra, who've attached themselves a little leech-like to the Camarilla's strongholds. You have Hecata hiding in the darkness, speaking to the dead, weaving their little webs. They're not really accepted on either side, but some of them have found a haven here with a Prince who's a little bit more open-minded perhaps than some of the other Camarilla might be. Regardless of why they stay in San Francisco, the Kindred of this area of the Bay Area tend to be very attached to their home. They like it here. They're safe here for the most part. Or so they think. And so tonight, on this cold, uncharacteristically rainy October night, all of you awake from wherever it is that you sleep to find an unsettling summons under your door. And it's not your front door: it's the door to the room where you rest, your inner sanctum. This summons, this card, is a bloody card with the twisted tragic mask of the Nosferatu bearing the Prince's sigil of a black and red star in the center. And on the back you find the words in the Prince's very distinctive, elegant Old World handwriting: "The Labyrinth. Immediately." The Labyrinth is in the theater district; it is an underground, quite literally, theater owned by a Toreador theater manager. In the daytime, it is used by various underground hipster productions of spoken word poetry and other performances that might not find their home on the regular stage. But at night, it's often used by other darker theater troupes. And it's been rumored that occasionally you can find the Prince there, and it seems now that your Prince has summoned you tonight, so what I would like to know from each of you is, how do you react? And do you go immediately? So Mike, how does Marcus react to finding this card under his door?

M

Mike (Marcus) 10:27

MIKE (MARCUS) 11:27

He's probably troubled. The Prince of San Francisco is someone who's known to him in some way. And having dealt with the potential ire of the Prince in the past, only to have it abated, for reasons he prefers to keep secret. A direct summons from the Prince is something in Camarilla traditions that cannot be ignored. It must be answered. And it is one thing to get a card to be invited by the Prince somewhere, but yet that such an elder would have to or feel the need to inscribe the note with "immediately" is probably concerning.

S

Storyteller Rina 11:27

Certainly not the most traditional message.

M

Mike (Marcus) 11:36

No, so I think his reaction would likely be first of concern. And then secondly would be to attempt to prepare himself for such an event. And knowing that the missive came with such emotion attached to it, that would mean that there's likely the propensity for more emotion to come.

S

Storyteller Rina 12:04

Which perhaps in and of itself is a troubling idea.

M

Mike (Marcus) 12:07

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. So I think Marcus would would go out of his loft bedroom at the warehouse and step down and see if there are any vestiges of staff left from the previous events, and tried to prepare himself for what is likely going to be a very complex evening.

S

Storyteller Rina 12:34

You find Greg at his desk as usual, 5 or 6 Red Bull cans scattered on the ground, a giant cup of coffee. Perhaps the previous events, replacing the caffeine with the decaf, may have helped because he doesn't seem to be shaking as much, but he is very intently focused on his laptop.

M

Mike (Marcus) 13:01

Certainly. I'll step over and say,

M

Marcus 13:06

Greg, have there been any visitors during the day?

S Storyteller Rina 13:12
Greg looks up bleary eyed.

G Greg 13:15
Visitors. Visitors, visitors... No, no, no, no, no, no one's here. Nope. Just you, boss. Nope. Everyone else isn't here yet. Nope.

M Marcus 13:29
Ok. I will be... I'll be leaving for tonight. I don't know when I'll be back.

G Greg 13:36
Oh, ok. I got the the the form, the form, the form, from from the lawyer guy. That they're there, they're dropping the thing. The thing, the thing, the case! Yes, the case, the case, the case.

M Marcus 13:51
Good. Remember, Greg, hydrate. You've had way too much.

G Greg 13:56
Right, hydrate.

S Storyteller Rina 13:57
And he pulls out a Red Bull and pops the tab.

M Mike (Marcus) 13:59
Oh lord. Well, I say, I think to myself, "if I ever need a pick me up, I know exactly who to come to."

S Storyteller Rina 14:10
Oh, yes. So Marcus will prepare himself and set off into the dark. What about Alex? How is Alex responding?

T Tiffanie (Alex) 14:27

Probably cursing Luther again. And probably going to pick out a good suit, so maybe like a red velour suit with a black dress shirt and a red tie. Get my nice shoes on and then probably grab a snack on the way to the labyrinth, but I'm not in a particular hurry because everything's got to be just so. But I'm also not dilly dallying either.

S Storyteller Rina 15:09

You're not not in a hurry.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 15:10

Yeah. Mostly I'm hoping that I'll run into Luther so I can yell at him. I mean, quote, yell, I don't really raise my voice but you know.

S Storyteller Rina 15:20

Of course. So Alex will grab a snack out of the fridge from their previous excursions before heading out in a steady, calm unhurried, manner, perhaps. And what about Katerina?

K Katerina 15:41

She would definitely be concerned, especially after the visit she had at the party the previous night. And almost a little frustrated about it because she had like a list of priorities going in her head. And it kind of messes up plans that she had, but that can all be taken care of later. But given that the cafe's really close by, she is definitely going to be going in to leave a note that lets whoever's working that night know that she is not going to be there that evening.

S Storyteller Rina 16:38

It's Ray Ray's night off, so he's not there, but you can leave a note for Lucy and whoever else will be coming in, certainly, before you head off.

K Katerina 16:51

Yeah, and depending on how far the meet point is, I would probably walk over, like, taking a car or the trolley.

S Storyteller Rina 17:10

So you will enter into the dangers of public transportation as you answer your Prince's summons. So how about Rahm?

- T** Teagan (Rahm) 17:25
Rahm picks it up off the floor and is just like,
- R** Rahm the Shaman 17:32
Preethi? Preethi, I need you.
- S** Storyteller Rina 17:37
Preethi comes running down the stairs, almost tripping over her flip flops.
- P** Preethi 17:44
Yes, Master Rahm?
- T** Teagan (Rahm) 17:46
And Rahm is just kind of looking at this and is muttering under their breath about fancy invitations and stuff. He kind of swallows their spit and their pride for a second and hands it to Preethi and says,
- R** Rahm the Shaman 18:05
I... You see... Can you, can you read the second word on the, on the, on the envelope?
- T** Teagan (Rahm) 18:16
You see, Rahm is kind of a product of the public school system and learned to type but didn't really learn to read cursive very well. And they don't like to admit it.
- R** Rahm the Shaman 18:27
But Preethi, can you, would you read this second line for me?
- P** Preethi 18:37
It says... "The Labyrinth. Immediately."

R

Rahm the Shaman 18:42

Yes. Yes. I read the labyrinth. Thank you. Okay. Shit. Okay. No worries. No worries. I've got this.

S

Storyteller Rina 18:55

She looks at you with these huge worried brown eyes.

P

Preethi 19:00

Is something wrong, Master Rahm?

R

Rahm the Shaman 19:03

No, I just... I will not be here this evening. I'm going to have to go out. You're in charge. Keep Eric out of trouble. No, no, you're fine. Just keep Eric out of trouble. I have an appointment that I need to keep.

T

Teagan (Rahm) 19:25

And Rahm will immediately go and...Rahm does not have anything formal in their closet, but they're going to try to find their best pair of Chucks and...they're leather, they've got a little stretchy strap thing... and put on at least some clean pants and a clean button up, most likely plaid, and then immediately head out, depending on how far away it is, they're either going to walk swiftly or they will take an Uber,

S

Storyteller Rina 20:08

You're probably going to have to Uber if you want to get there with any sense of speed.

T

Teagan (Rahm) 20:14

And of course, the app is not working at the moment. So I'm having to reboot it, in San Francisco of all places, but then I finally am able to get one and I'm heading straight there. I am a tiny, furry ball of anxiety.

S

Storyteller Rina 20:30

So as our tiny furry vampire ball of anxiety makes his way to the theater, what about Vince? How is Vince responding to all of this?

J John (Vince) 20:48
Vince is currently trying to convince the ghost that,

V Vince 20:51
No, this is a big deal, I can't read to you right now.

S Storyteller Rina 20:57
The book slams shut on your fingers. It hurts.

V Vince 21:04
Yes, that's very, very mature yet. Great. Look, I got a summons from someone very powerful. And I'm scared of them. So you know, weird vampire stuff.

J John (Vince) 21:16
And he's frowning at the book as he's saying this. He's just,

V Vince 21:20
Yeah, no, I've got to go and talk to the Prince. When I joined I was told about the Prince. I was told, if you can't have anything to do with them, that's good.

S Storyteller Rina 21:30
You see phantasmal spiders climbing up your wall opposite the bookshelf.

J John (Vince) 21:36
And he's just like,

V Vince 21:37
Yeah, I take it to mean that you appreciate my fear. Excellent. Thank you. So yes, I will read to you when I get back.

J John (Vince) 21:46

But he's like,

V Vince 21:48

I hope I make it back...Oh god.

J John (Vince) 21:52

He's just like staring it at the desk. And he's like, Okay, I'm gonna have a shower, and I'm gonna get dressed. And then I'm going to go okay. So he literally just goes through the motions. *laughs*

S Storyteller Rina 22:08

As you exit the library and close the door behind you, you hear this clattering sound of all of your books being thrown off the shelves.

J John (Vince) 22:17

It's just like,

V Vince 22:18

Oh, I'll clean all that up when I get home. So that's great.

S Storyteller Rina 22:25

If you get home.

J John (Vince) 22:26

If I, if I get home. Yeah, I mean, there's a very real chance, given what I was told recently, that I might not, so that's, that's fantastic. Um, yeah, he does get dressed, he puts on his best clothes, which, given that he spends most of his time at work, or in the library is a, you know, just a nice pair of slacks, a shirt, nice, decent pair of shoes that he would have worn to interviews. And he throws on just his leather jacket that he has, because it keeps the wind off. He used to need that at nighttime. Not so much anymore. As he's about to leave, he's just like, wait almost forgot. He goes back into the library. And he like, just opens his coffin, reaches in takes out the little notebook, his Sire's one. And he's just like, yep, probably going to need this, and just puts it in the breast pocket and he shuts up. And he's like,

V Vince 23:34

I'll clean up the books when I get back. But look, I'll tell you all about it. But I mean, if you could tidy up the books, that that would be great. I'm sorry that I'm stressed out.

J John (Vince) 23:46

And he's just gonna leave before the ghost can react. *laughs*

S Storyteller Rina 23:50

You run out and quickly slam the door shut without hearing any more altercations behind you, but who knows what state your library will be in when you get back. So considering all that Vince goes through with with the ghost and getting ready and how anxious he's feeling, I think Vince is the last person to arrive. So you walk in, Vince, you have to go down this really steep flight of stairs, these kind of Victorian style stairs that are almost straight up and down. And it takes you a minute to get all the way underground; you have to get past a couple bouncers who look at you and realize you're one of the Kindred, and they wave you on in. It's a little intimidating perhaps, it's got this pair of twins, twin vampires staring down at you from their 6'7 height. But you scuttle in past them and you go through this hallway. It's lined with these very Greek style pillars, very elegant, very classic looking, and they look to be made, actually out of marble. That's very expensive for these parts. But it's a very long hallway and it does nothing to reduce your anxiety and your feelings of dread, as you move along. There's no other sound in this hallway at the moment. And you hear a few skittering noises. Maybe there's some bats or rats are something down here, who knows? When you finally get to the end of the hallway, there's a large oak door that just swings open, as if on its own. And you are in some kind of green room for theater performers before they go on stage. It looks like there are props everywhere. There's a few togas hanging on the wall. On one side, there's what looks like an Egyptian headdress just hanging on the model of a head over in a corner. There's prop tables and furniture everywhere. And you see four other vampires. And so the four of you who are in the room have been here for a few minutes. What are you doing as Vince stumbles into this slightly, perhaps tense situation?

T Teagan (Rahm) 26:43

Trying not to chew on my nails.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 26:48

I'm just observing.

S Storyteller Rina 26:52

What about Marcus?

M Mike (Marcus) 26:55

I think Marcus would probably be a little too pent up to not move, so he probably walks over and make sure that this newest addition here found his footing properly.

S Storyteller Rina 27:15

So Vince, you have a very...energetic, let's say, vampire walking up to you. Marcus, maybe give an idea of what what you look like tonight so that Vince gets the full effect?

M Mike (Marcus) 27:38

The full effect. Yeah, so I would say that Marcus is probably just about six or so feet tall. He probably wears a leather jacket, though not a biker jacket. He probably looks like he could walk into and/or out of any sort of we'll say casual business attire as necessary. Although he probably doesn't look comfortable in it, he looks a little bit like a stuffed shirt. He is fairly powerfully built. And he has short cropped brown hair. And there's likely something that is just hovering on the surface of his face that bleeds from anxiety to aggression, although not anger.

S Storyteller Rina 28:36

He kind of towers over Vince as he moves towards you, and you can tell this is a being who is used to movement and energy and you can almost feel this pent up maybe aggression, maybe just nerves, you're not really sure, almost bowling you over as he moves towards you.

J John (Vince) 28:59

Vince isn't a big guy by any means. He is tops 5'8. He's like,

V Vince 29:09

Hi, I'm Vince. I, I I've got a card.

J John (Vince) 29:15

And he's just like,

V Vince 29:16

I've got this card.

J John (Vince) 29:18
And he holds it up. He's like, please don't hurt me. His body language is screaming "please don't hurt me. I'm scared of all of you."

M Marcus 29:31
That's precious. That's a nice card. But I'm not a doorman.

V Vince 29:35
Oh, thank God.

J John (Vince) 29:38
And he's like, he just visibly collapses a little bit with nerves. He's just like, and I must point out, Vince's leather jacket is too big for him, and it's clearly old and it's just like, it's like one of those 90s leather jackets where people wore the ones that were like a size too big, so they were extra baggy, and yeah, he's just like,

V Vince 30:02
Oh, good. I, uh , I woke up and this was under my door. I, you know, I'm still pretty new to the whole thing.

J John (Vince) 30:15
He's doing hand gestures. He's saying, he's just like,

V Vince 30:18
So yeah, I I just came here. I was only in here once and I've never actually been in this room. It's it's real nice. Yeah, it's real nice. Sorry, I'm Vince.

M Mike (Marcus) 30:32
Yeah, I caught that. I mean, I'd tell you to breathe but we're pretty much beyond that.

S Storyteller Rina 30:37
Katerina, how are you responding to this situation? You're sitting off to the side and you just see this new, obviously very anxious person come in and you see the very obviously aggressive

Brujah that has been stalking around for the past few minutes suddenly go bolting up to him.
How are you responding?

K Katerina 30:59

With very thinly-veiled disdain. Mostly because there's just not there's not any reason to be so outwardly emotional all the time, in her opinion, and that's the problem with some of these newer Kindred, it's that they're, they're just too outward with how they're feeling about everything. She's definitely biting her tongue before making any comments because she is not gentle when it comes to some of the things she says.

S Storyteller Rina 31:51

As as you're having this conversation, Vince and Marcus, and the rest of you are kind of sitting there watching and not speaking to each other, and Rahm, as you successfully avoid biting your nails for the moment, the door leading towards what you assume is the stage swings open with a loud clang. What do you do?

V Vince 32:18

Yeah, I guess that's our cue. Ha. Break a leg everybody.

J John (Vince) 32:25

And he just like, wiggles his arms, like a little dance.

M Mike (Marcus) 32:31

I turn and face the door, obviously.

T Teagan (Rahm) 32:34

I'm just cursing, but quietly, in the corner.

K Katerina 32:40

I will definitely be following towards the door. Like pushing myself off of the wall a little bit from how I was leaned against it.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 32:52

Is there no one in the door?

- S** Storyteller Rina 32:54
No one in the door. It's just open.
- T** Tiffanie (Alex) 32:57
Alright, then. I will calmly, with no expression, just walk towards the door.
- R** Rahm the Shaman 33:05
So you know, that's that's the composure we should be cultivating.
- T** Teagan (Rahm) 33:09
I'm just saying to our to our newest member. And then I attempt to mimic that and also follow through the door
- J** John (Vince) 33:28
Vince is gonna walk through but like, ahead of Marcus, and he feels like he's going into a hit. He's like, "Yeah, I'm absolutely not making it out of here alive. They, they're going to blame me for what she did. And yeah, this is an assassination and I, I'm going to die a real death."
- M** Mike (Marcus) 33:49
I fall in behind Vince in a, at least at a reasonable pace. I want to make sure that nothing else follows us into this room.
- S** Storyteller Rina 34:02
You all file out onto the stage. It's fairly dark. You've only got the light coming through from the green room at the moment. The curtains have been pulled back. You can see dimly these red velvet curtains that are tied back with gold chords, and you're all good at the dark; you don't need too much light anyway, but it feels oddly dark in here. Very oddly dark. And so it's a little difficult for your eyes to adjust to seeing all the details that you're used to seeing when you walk into the night. And you can make out the the floorboards here on the stage and you can make out the rim of where the light should be. You realize you're just barely lifted above where the audience should be sitting. You can see the outline of rows and rows of seats, but you can't see a whole lot else beyond that. And it takes you a moment to adjust as you all sort of stand spread out on this stage looking around trying to figure out, why can't you see? Why is it so dark in here? And then all of a sudden, there is this bright, bright light lighting up the entire room, and it hurts your eyes, like it burns almost for a moment, with how bright this light is.

And it illuminates everything to the point where all you can see is light. And after a moment it starts to dim a bit and you adjust and the lights come down and adjust. And as you blink and stand there staring past the light into whatever's beyond it, there is a balcony of some kind, you can see that now just straight ahead of you. And there's a figure standing on that balcony, tall and proud. And you hear a voice. What does the Prince say, Bridgett?

T The Prince 36:25

Marcus Voss, Brujah. Alex Giovanni, Hecata. Katerina Bogdanovich, Toreador. Vince Markevich, Tremere. Rahm the Shaman, Malkavian. Gracias for accepting our invitation, and welcome to our court.

T Teagan (Rahm) 36:59

I bow the best I feel like I should be bowing in the situation. A little bit a fish out of water.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 37:09

It appears that Rahm is the only one of you that remembers their etiquette. Are you not supposed to kneel before your Prince?

J John (Vince) 37:23

At this admonishment, yeah, Vince is just like on on both his knees, bowing down. He's like,

V Vince 37:30

Forgive me, My Prince.

T Teagan (Rahm) 37:35

Oh yeah, I'm very flexible, so I'm immediately bowing.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 37:39

I'm trying real hard not to roll my eyes.

M Mike (Marcus) 37:43

I am going to smirk and slight respect to whomever, if I don't know Alex by clan or by person, I will at least give a very slight smirk at the idea that they are not once, not twice, but three times ignoring the prince. And I'm going to pick my battles and go ahead and in, in proper

standing with the status that I have, I will kneel.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 38:10

At which Alex stands there and says,

A Alex 38:13

Well, dear Prince, if I was a part of your Camarilla...

T The Prince 38:20

You have not been given position to speak to your Prince.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 38:25

You are Prince of the city. However...

T The Prince 38:29

You continue to speak without permission. The audacity.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 38:36

I am not a part of your Camarilla. You are...

T The Prince 38:39

Yet again, still speaking. If I must remind you of your etiquette again, the consequences will be dire. I cared not of your connections, or who sired you, or what it is you think that you have that gives you such confidence. But I promise you, little one, I will strip that all away from you. Now kneel.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 39:06

I stand. They have their hands behind their back and you know, just standing in perfect posture, not being aggressive or anything, but not kneeling either.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 39:19

And the Prince is standing in the balcony, staring directly at you. There is a smirk that is playing

And the Prince is standing in the balcony, staring directly at you. There is a smirk that is playing on their lips, which is in stark contrast to the extremely long fingernails that are tapping in some type of rhythm across the edge of the metal balcony. And they just stare at you.

S Storyteller Rina 39:43

So I think what I would like here is a contested Willpower roll. So what we're going to do with this is you're both going to roll Willpower, but you're going to be at a bit of a disadvantage here, Alex, because you are not not the Prince. But it's going to be 5 successes needed, Alex, on your end.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 40:23

Ok, I just got 3.

S Storyteller Rina 40:26

Ok, so our prince has a critical here with 2 10s out of 6 successes. So I will let you decide to how you're going to respond to this, but you can feel this sort of intense power radiating from the Prince, and you feel this kind of reluctant compulsion stirring in your blood. Yes, you're not Camarilla, yes, this goes against what you, what you believe. But you are here under the protection of the Prince and your Sire did teach you the rules of the Masquerade, where you respect the rule of the Prince whose land you're staying on and you feel this almost pounding headache beginning to build in the back of your skull.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 41:32

Well then, they probably bow slightly, but will not kneel all the way. But I mean, if they need a theatrical, you know, show of respect, then that's fine.

S Storyteller Rina 41:47

Alright, so you give in slightly, enough to maintain your pride. But you do bend your head to the Prince as a show of deference to their position. After you have all bowed, taken the knee, whatever it is you have decided to do, the lights are clearing away and this sort of strange unnatural darkness has cleared and you can fully see the Prince standing on the balcony above you. And Bridgett, describe for us our Prince.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 42:24

They are of Afro-Latino descent. Your Prince is tall, lean and is dressed immaculately in a three piece tuxedo suit, this is the slim fit, waistcoat, with the interior red lining to the jacket, cufflinks that do catch the light even as the lights are dimming, and pockets of course. But they are Nosferatu and there is absolutely nothing charismatically attractive about this particular

individual. There is a hollowness in their eyes that gives the impression that something is trying to call out from the inside of this individual's being and surface through their eyes. Their ears are long, wrinkled, and pull back into points and they currently look mildly amused, maybe a mite irritated.

S Storyteller Rina 43:26

You can see fully for the first time, perhaps, for most of you, the figure of your Prince, and you are allowed to stand.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 43:37

And the Prince is going to be obviously speaking to the group of you, but their eyes are 100%, body language, chin those sunken black eyes, are locked on to Alex and they say,

T The Prince 43:50

We have an assignment for you. One night prior, our Sheriff Luther was slain in his own home.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 44:05

And the eyes intensify as they bead in on Alex.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 44:12

Yeah, I would think that because I was cursing Luther the whole way here, I don't think I could hold back the all of the surprise from my eyes.

S Storyteller Rina 44:22

So, Prince, you notice that the hitherto calm and collected and masked almost Alex Giovanni seems a little shocked at your announcement.

T Teagan (Rahm) 44:40

I think Rahm immediately is giving, not that you weren't already getting 102% of the attention, but immediately 120% of the attention when you mentioned Luther and him being dead. Absolutely.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 45:03

Their eyes breaking with Alex's for just a moment to glance across the impressions, reactions,

body language of the others on the stage on their stage and they say,

- T** The Prince 45:13
Gracias para tu silencio. Luther's head was sawed off. Su corazon, his heart, ripped from his chest and placed in his right hand as some type of offering. You, each of you, and yes, that does include you Alex Giovanni, inmediatamente will begin investigations into Luther's murder.
- J** John (Vince) 45:48
Vince raises his hand like a kid in a school room.
- B** Bridgett (The Prince) 45:58
They nod slowly.
- V** Vince 46:06
Not, not to be rude, Prince, but is this, is this related to the murder of your clan cousin?
- J** John (Vince) 46:19
And he immediately, like as soon as it leaves his mouth, he's like, "Fuck. Oh god, what have I said?"
- B** Bridgett (The Prince) 46:27
They blink, but show no recognizable response to that and they respond,
- T** The Prince 46:41
You will soon tell us if there is a relation between this and the untimely murder of Luis. You see, events are much like the stage.
- B** Bridgett (The Prince) 46:58
And they open their hands, presenting you to yourself.
- T** The Prince 47:01
Much like the stage you find yourself upon now, you will soon be performing. You will be

much like the stage you find yourself upon now, you will soon be performing. You will be performing for us a production in which we are the patron and los directores. You will be evaluated, you will be watched. In this assignment, we demand obedience without question.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 47:25

And their eyes flicker directly back to Alex.

T The Prince 47:28

And loyalty without hesitation. We will accept nothing less. You will not disappoint us. For the cost of our disappointment is not paid in blood or death. It is paid in suffering and if you fail us, or if you speak to anyone about this, we promise you will all suffer.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 47:57

Alex will step forward just slightly.

A Alex 48:00

Excuse me, dear Prince, do we have access to Luther's body?

B Bridgett (The Prince) 48:08

The Prince raises a hairless eyebrow to you and gives you a vague smile and says,

T The Prince 48:14

Yes, directions to Luther's home will be provided to you. It is currently under the supervision of one of ours, Jean Valentine. You will have access to the body and the scene. Thank you.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 48:34

They look across the faces of each of you. And does that same finger curl where they're offering the floor to any further questions.

M Mike (Marcus) 48:45

So if given the opening, then I think Marcus would say,

M Marcus 48:50



Marcus 48:50

My Prince, I have two questions, if I may. For the Kindred who are allowed to continue to exist within your domain, who will sit in the role of Sheriff now that Luther has fallen?



Bridgett (The Prince) 49:17

There's a very long, very hard pause that may be indicative of a flash of emotion, maybe and the Prince says,



The Prince 49:29

And your next inquiry?



Marcus 49:34

When do you require this information by? How long does this group have?



The Prince 49:41

Now would be preferable to us.



Marcus 49:45

Understood.



Teagan (Rahm) 49:47

Yeah, Rahm is just racking his brain, trying to figure out if there is...what quality within themselves is what drew the Prince's eye to them, what is it, what is it about them and their particular abilities that would be useful to an investigation? One of the few moments when Rahm is actually being internally humble, mostly because Rahm does not want to screw up.



Rahm the Shaman 50:20

I will begin meditating on the issue at once and see what we can...I'm sure we will be swift in uncovering the...



Teagan (Rahm) 50:31

Just flowery language just coming out of Rahm.

R Rahm the Shaman 50:35
Just in righting this wrong and this offense to your court.

M Mike (Marcus) 50:40
I fucking roll my eyes.

T The Prince 50:47
Malkavian, your flattery falls on deaf ears. You have an assignment. If you wish to impress us, do what you've been assigned to do.

R Rahm the Shaman 51:03
At once.

T The Prince 51:05
You are dismissed.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 51:06
Ah yeah. Then I turn to leave and I'm going to head to get Luther's information and head to his place.

K Katerina 51:19
And I will curtsy again.

T The Prince 51:26
Oh, Katerina? Uno momento con tu principe, if you would honor us with a moment of your private time.

S Storyteller Rina 51:38
So the other four go back through the open door into the green room. The door slams shut behind you, and Katerina, you are left alone on this stage in the presence of your prints.

T The Prince 51:55
Luther came to see you before he died. Tell us, what did you discuss?

K Katerina 52:04
He brought to my attention that your cousin was partaking in my products for our fellow Kindred and as I do not personally screen everyone anymore, as the numbers have grown quite large over the years. I assured him that I would go back through the paperwork to find out when it was that he joined and started partaking in the services I deliver. I was going to do that this evening before I received your summons, my Prince.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 53:11
They nod, slowly.

T The Prince 53:16
Put a name to this cousin.

A Ali (Katerina) 53:19
Luis.

T The Prince 53:20
Luis.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 53:24
They nod again.

T The Prince 53:27
You are dismissed, Katerina, with this additional expectation from your prince. There is now a collar on this Alex Giovanni's throat, and at the end of the leash is your hand. If Alex oversteps, it is your responsibility to correct on my behalf. Do you understand me, Katerina?

K Katerina 54:03
And there is a slow smile that spreads across my face. And I bow forward with a hand fully extended and one foot tucked behind the other.

K Katerina 54:22
It would be my honor, my Prince.

B Bridgett (The Prince) 54:27
They smirk just for a moment. It's brief, and then they disappear back into the balcony.

K Katerina 54:34
And I wait until I hear the footsteps retreat before I pull myself out of the pose and I walk and open the door.

S Storyteller Rina 54:46
You go back into the green room with everyone else. You're sort of stewing there for a few moments as the door closes behind you. Both doors are closed. If you try to exit the green room, it appears to be locked for the moment. Do you all interact in any way? Marcus begins pacing, I assume?

M Mike (Marcus) 55:17
No, I don't think so. I think that after probably trying the door, realizing it's locked, immediately thinking better about breaking the door, he probably just, he probably starts thinking a little bit about a city without a Sheriff, which is very dangerous. And the fact that the Prince could not answer him as to who will be put in charge is also bad. And so thinking about again, not but probably 30 miles due south, past Oakland, is likely an Anarch group. If it gets out that the city of San Francisco has no Sheriff, that's bad, like real bad, for everybody. So yes, I'm probably pacing **now**, now that we've gotten through all of that. I'd like to get out of this box.

T Teagan (Rahm) 56:13
I think Rahm wants to know the same thing they were thinking about themselves, they want to know, what is what is everyone's backgrounds. This is, this is how they feel comfort, they, they they are a bit controlling. And as soon as they realize that there is something that is going to affect them, a mission, something that is going to put themselves at risk, they need to mitigate that risk. So I'm probably going, starting with our sparkling baby boy, I am going around asking for everyone's experience, what their background is, figure out why we particular few were selected, beyond being what is gradually becoming my own suspicion that we are all ones that have...we owe something to the Prince. And if that is all we have, that is binding us together, that we are really and truly screwed. So I am trying my best to put that out of my mind by asking the individuals, you know, what their backgrounds are.

J John (Vince) 57:31
Since you start with Vince, he's just like,

V Vince 57:32
Oh, well, I'm actually a nurse. I do end of life care.

J John (Vince) 57:38
And like, he's gonna be calmer now that he's like, well, I'm not going to be executed. today.
He's like,

R Rahm the Shaman 57:48
I don't know. I left my dictionary at home. What was their name?

V Vince 57:48
Well, the only thing I can think of is that Sheriff Garibaldi, he confronted me in my place of work. And he, he, he had questions about the murder of the Prince's clan cousin. Is that the term for when they're from the same clan? I don't, I don't know.

V Vince 58:19
Oh, he didn't give me any names. He just, yeah, he just asked if I knew anything about it.

R Rahm the Shaman 58:26
Have you heard of a Dina Forthright?

J John (Vince) 58:29
He just shakes his head.

A Alex 58:39
It's a made up name. I guarantee you 100%. It's a made up name.



T Teagan (Rahm) 58:46

Rahm looks at you and goes,

R Rahm the Shaman 58:48

But you have heard the name?

A Alex 58:51

Probably from the same place that all of you have. He made it seem like he came to us individually to ask us questions, as if we were the only one. But if you look around, everybody has the same name. And the same story. This is kind of suspicious, don't you think? Considering we were all informed about one particular death, and now he's dead. Hmm. Interesting.

R Rahm the Shaman 59:25

Like, like a cop show. Like he went, he went looking for the mysterious person and the mysterious person found him and then killed him.

V Vince 59:34

Or persons. You know, I mean, Luther Garibaldi was pretty, pretty powerful vampire. He was the Sheriff. So from what I was told, he's, well, most of us wouldn't stand a chance on our own with him in a room.

J John (Vince) 1:00:00

He's just like kind of squinting at Rahm, he's like,

V Vince 1:00:03

You know, like, pretty sure, given that I've seen him feed, he could tear you or me apart.

R Rahm the Shaman 1:00:12

Oh, for sure. Absolutely. No doubt. Ok, well, this, this also does not bear well for us now. We are 5 against something out there that could take out something like Luther. I mean, we haven't been charged with taking this, this creature, this individual down, we're just in charge of investigating. We are just poking, we are, we're prodding the ether looking for answers, right?



V Vince 1:00:43
I intend to actually prod Luther's corpse because I'm going to do my first vampire autopsy.

A Alex 1:00:53
Oh, wait, no, no.

J John (Vince) 1:00:56
He's like,

V Vince 1:00:57
What, no? Oh, come on.

M Marcus 1:01:00
Yeah, clearly, you have to go second to them, it seems.

M Mike (Marcus) 1:01:04
I chuckle from the doorway.

A Alex 1:01:06
You, you can touch the body after I am done. I do not want your young little fingers. messing it up.

J John (Vince) 1:01:18
I have been warned about Clan Hecata, and I'm like,

V Vince 1:01:22
Yes. Ok.

R Rahm the Shaman 1:01:25
Of course. But the thing is that we are all individuals that don't appear to have had any prior interactions with one another. I hope you'll understand our natural suspicion. And not that

you're suspicious. But that if you're going to go in there and touch the body, I think we all want to watch.

A Alex 1:01:48

Oh, that's perfectly fine. I mean, if you want to poke it to maybe look under the eyelids, see if there's anything in his throat. Oh, or you could put it on strings and make it dance like a marionette. I mean, it's really up to you.

T Teagan (Rahm) 1:02:07

Just muttering under my breath,

R Rahm the Shaman 1:02:08

So much angst with this one.

J John (Vince) 1:02:09

Vince is just like,

V Vince 1:02:11

Look, I just want to see how different it is from, you know, a human body. I'm just curious. I'm so new to this. I've never seen a vampire corpse.

A Alex 1:02:24

Well, fact that there is still a corpse and not a pile of ashes is interesting to me. The other thing is, I just want to make it clear, I'm not angry with any of you. But I want you to know that all this politics is bullshit. And there's a reason I'm not part of the Camarilla, ok? We got that? Awesome.

M Marcus 1:02:53

And what is that reason?

A Alex 1:02:55

What's that?

M Marcus 1:02:57
Exactly,

M Mike (Marcus) 1:02:58
I say from the corner.

M Marcus 1:03:00
But what is, what is that reason why you're not a part of the Camarilla?

A Alex 1:03:07
The Giovanni do not ally themselves with either side.

M Marcus 1:03:11
But you enjoy the freedom and the protection of the Prince's domain.

A Alex 1:03:15
Um, well, there aren't very many places you can go without one, or a leader. Second, when you know things, you can go a lot of places.

M Marcus 1:03:30
I don't disagree. I'm simply agreeing that the Prince is leveraging your abilities, especially after you enjoy the protection freedom of being able to move within their domain.

A Alex 1:03:44
Sure. I mean, everything has a price, does it not?

M Marcus 1:03:49
Certainly. And whether you're Camarilla or not, you bowed like everyone else.

A Alex 1:03:56
I just wanted to not this, this whole should be...

I just wanted to get this, this whole charade moving.

M Marcus 1:04:03

Many long nights ahead.

R Rahm the Shaman 1:04:06

I understand that you are not as invested in this as the rest of us. So whatever we can do to support and motivate you to solve this mystery for us and help us solve this mystery keeps our heads on our shoulders. So I'm not going to be opposing to you. I'm going to help you.

A Alex 1:04:32

Don't misunderstand me, Luther was a friend. Sort of. I mean, I guess. Do we all really have friends? But anyways, um, I didn't dislike him. How about that? And I don't think I'm okay with somebody taking him away from me. So I have my own interests

S Storyteller Rina 1:05:03

How is Katerina dealing with all this? Are you just observing, watching? What are you doing?

A Ali (Katerina) 1:05:15

I'm mostly watching. Getting a little more irritated by the second and like, just slowly tapping my fingers on my legs. There's about to be a breaking point of composed annoyance to come out.

S Storyteller Rina 1:05:49

As things begin to boil over, the door swings open and standing in the doorway is a figure you have heard of, but perhaps have not met. You see Claudio Ricci, who is one of the primogens for the Bay Area, part of the court of the Prince. Claudio is a Toreador, so perhaps Katerina is familiar with him. But he is dressed in very trendy fashionable clothes, very tight skinny jeans, they look like they've been painted onto his body. He's wearing a silk shirt with puffy sleeves that probably went out of style 100 years ago but has since come back into style. His hair is incredibly gelled to make it look like he just got out of bed this way but probably spent three hours building up his hair, and this is a familiar look for many of you who wander around the streets of San Francisco, and he's wearing very heavy eyeliner and several earrings in his right ear and they jiggle a little bit as he moves. And he comes in and he looks at all of you in turn. He says,

C Claudio 1:07:28

C Claudio 1:07:29
Ah, vassals of the Prince. I have some information for you.

S Storyteller Rina 1:07:34
And he bows and he hands a card to you, Alex, and the card has an address on it. It's in the Mission District.

C Claudio 1:07:47
You will find things are as we found them. The Prince was very, very intentional that nothing be moved.

A Alex 1:07:59
Well that's good. Thank you very much.

C Claudio 1:08:04
And you will find on the back the phone number for the new Sheriff. If you have information to report, you will report it there unless you are summoned.

A Alex 1:08:21
Who is our new Sheriff?

C Claudio 1:08:26
One of yours, Marcus.

S Storyteller Rina 1:08:30
And Claudia looks at you and smirks slightly.

C Claudio 1:08:36
You know, of course, Esmeralda.

M Mike (Marcus) 1:08:41
I assume I do. What do I know about Esmeralda?

S

Storyteller Rina 1:08:45

Yes, Esmeralda is one of the Brujah. She's been in this area longer than you have, Marcus. She's been a fixture of the Union agitation side of things. She has left town several times and come back under different names to avoid being detected by various of the Kine who would come after her for her...her labors. But she has a reputation for being brutal, not very diplomatic, and also just fairly nasty person. She likes to get into fights. You know she likes to fight with just about anyone. She has a hair trigger. And perhaps it's not surprising that she'd be next up for this role.

M

Mike (Marcus) 1:09:46

Sure. I smile at Claudio.

M

Marcus 1:09:49

Of course, we're acquainted.

C

Claudio 1:09:52

I thought as much. Yes. Strange days we have happening now.

S

Storyteller Rina 1:10:03

And he shakes his head and you can hear his hair crinkling slightly from all the gel.

C

Claudio 1:10:10

But I think between the five of you, you will all find the things that you need to solve this mystery. You understand that we, of course, are too high profile, we need the peoples who are not the high profile. And well, I do not speak for the mind of the Prince, but they must have some reason for choosing all of you. And the brother of the Prince, the deceased brother Luis. Alex, I have more information to send to you. You will find it perhaps tomorrow. I will send it with the signature of the Prince. I must approve, you know. Thank you. And, Mr. Shaman, you have, you have the information on the Malkavian?

R

Rahm the Shaman 1:11:14

I have some information. I have been speaking to the rest of the Malkavians and we are holding counsel and attempting to track down this individual.

T Teagan (Rahm) 1:11:29
Knowing that they weren't in here for the previous conversation, I'm going to go and share that intel that you said, but claim it as my own and just be like,

R Rahm the Shaman 1:11:37
it's most likely a false name, we believe.

C Claudio 1:11:44
Yes, yes. This is not my area. Luther, he said he was talking to you. So you will have the information and you will bring it. Yes. And you will find the more information and you will bring it to Esmeralda.

R Rahm the Shaman 1:12:02
Absolutely. Thank you.

C Claudio 1:12:04
Very well.

S Storyteller Rina 1:12:06
And he bows to you, Katerina.

C Claudio 1:12:12
The party was most magnificent. That is all I have to say to you.

S Storyteller Rina 1:12:17
And he looks at you, Vince, and cocks his head slightly and says,

C Claudio 1:12:26
Your...your sugar mama is not in good position right now. You should be careful.

J John (Vince) 1:12:35

J Vince has nothing. He's never met this guy before. And he fucking hates him right now. What a bunch of jerks.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 1:12:46
Yay, Toreadors.

S Storyteller Rina 1:12:49
Claudio just smiles and does this deep, exaggerated bow with both hands stretched out to the sides and says,

C Claudio 1:12:58
My job here is done. I have things to do. Goodbye.

S Storyteller Rina 1:13:02
And he just walks off shaking his hips.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 1:13:09
I'm going to walk up to Rahm.

A Alex 1:13:13
Well, since you're so smart to figure out that that was a made-up name, I have a bit of information for you. I heard that Dina might be able to be found in Chinatown. So maybe you should check there first.

R Rahm the Shaman 1:13:32
Already ahead of you. Lovely. Um, I was there not just last night, speaking with a few of my compatriots. But now that I have at least one of the persons saying that that's a likely area of investigation, I will of course redouble my efforts in that particular area.

A Alex 1:14:00
I think it's a good place to start. I mean, if you want to trust me, because I'm the most hated right now.

- R** Rahm the Shaman 1:14:10
It's not that I don't want to trust you. It's just that you...you have a bit of a, please pardon me when I say this, you have a bit of an attitude. And that attitude lends itself towards suspicion. It's honestly, it's a little antisocial. And I'm just, I'm just, I'm just saying that I want to work with you. I just want to make sure you know that I'm crossing all my Is and dotting my Ts and and stuff.
- M** Marcus 1:14:47
Can we go?
- A** Alex 1:14:49
Oh, most assuredly. Did you want to go to Luther's first?
- M** Marcus 1:14:53
Absolutely.
- A** Alex 1:14:54
Good. Cuz that's where I'm going.
- R** Rahm the Shaman 1:14:57
Good! Let's go!
- S** Storyteller Rina 1:14:58
And that is where we will draw this episode to a close. So thank you all for your time, and next week, we will get into some vampiric murder investigation. So thank you all and have a good night and be safe out there in the dark.